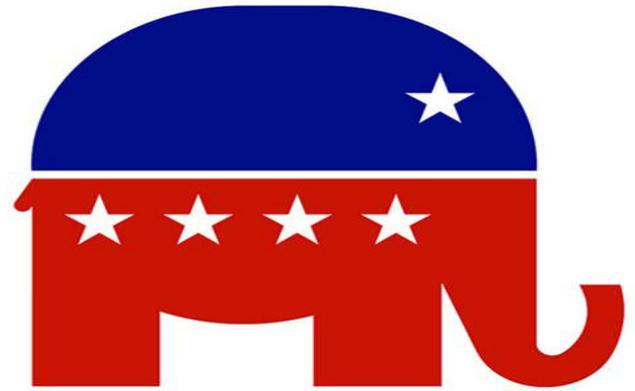
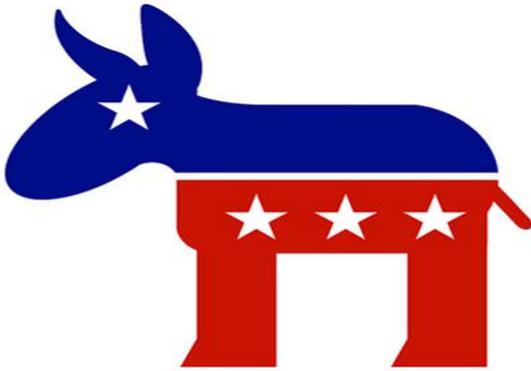


# Democrat vs. Republican



Diffen > Politics > U.S. Politics

This comparison examines the differences between the policies and political positions of the **Democratic** and **Republican** parties on major issues such as taxes, the role of government, entitlements (Social Security, Medicare), gun control, immigration, healthcare, abortion and gay rights. These two parties dominate America's political landscape but differ greatly in their philosophies and ideals.

[Democratic Party vs Republican Party](#) redirects here.

## Comparison chart

	<b>Democrat</b> User Rating (11689):	<b>Republican</b> User Rating (11566):
<b>Philosophy</b>	<u>Liberal, left-leaning.</u>	<u>Conservative, right-leaning.</u>
<b>Economic Ideas</b>	Minimum wages and progressive <u>taxation</u> , i.e., higher tax rates for higher income brackets. Born out of <u>anti-federalist</u> ideals but evolved over time to favor more government regulation.	Believe taxes shouldn't be increased for anyone (including the wealthy) and that wages should be set by the free market.
<b>Social and human ideas</b>	Based on community and social responsibility	Based on individual rights and justice
<b>Stance on Military issues</b>	Decreased spending	Increased spending
<b>Stance on Gay Marriage</b>	Support (some Democrats disagree)	Oppose (some Republicans disagree)
<b>Stance on Abortion</b>	Should not be made illegal; support <u>Roe v. Wade</u> (some Democrats disagree)	Should not be legal; oppose <u>Roe v. Wade</u> (some Republicans disagree)
<b>Stance on Death Penalty</b>	While support for the death penalty is strong among Democrats, opponents of the death penalty are a substantial fraction of the Democratic base.	A large majority of Republicans support the death penalty.

<b>Stance on Taxes</b>	Progressive (high income earners should be taxed at a higher rate). Generally not opposed to raising taxes to fund government.	Tend to favor a "flat tax" (same tax rate regardless of income). Generally opposed to raising taxes.
<b>Stance on Government Regulation</b>	Government regulations are needed to protect consumers.	Government regulations hinder free market <u>capitalism</u> and job growth.
<b>Healthcare Policy</b>	Support universal healthcare; strong support of government involvement in healthcare, including <u>Medicare and Medicaid</u> . Generally support Obamacare.	Private companies can provide healthcare services more efficiently than government-run programs. Oppose Obamacare provisions like (1) requirement for individuals to buy health insurance or pay a fine, (2) required coverage of contraceptives.
<b>Stance on Immigration</b>	There is greater overall support in the Democratic party for a moratorium on deporting - or offering a pathway to citizenship to - certain undocumented immigrants. e.g. those with no criminal record, who have lived in the U.S. for 5+ years.	Republicans are generally against amnesty for any undocumented immigrants. They also oppose President Obama's executive order that put a moratorium on deporting certain workers. Republicans also fund stronger enforcement actions at the border.
<b>Traditionally strong in states</b>	California, Massachusetts, New York	Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas
<b>Symbol</b>	Donkey	Elephant
<b>Color</b>	Blue	Red
<b>Founded in</b>	1824	1854
<b>Website</b>	www.democrats.org	www.gop.com
<b>Senate Leader</b>	Harry Reid	Mitch McConnell
<b>Chairperson</b>	Debbie Wasserman Schultz	Reince Priebus
<b>Famous Presidents</b>	Franklin Roosevelt (FDR), John F. Kennedy, Bill Clinton, Woodrow Wilson, Jimmy Carter, Barack Obama	<u>Abraham Lincoln</u> , Teddy Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Richard Nixon
<b>Seats in the Senate</b>	44/100	54/100
<b>Seats in the House of Representatives</b>	188/435	245/435
<b>Governorships</b>	18/50	31/50
<b>Membership</b>	43.1 million (as of 2012)	30.7 million (as of 2012)

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## Origin of the Democratic and Republican parties

The Democratic Party traces its origins to the anti-federalist factions around the time of America's independence from British rule. These factions were organized into the Democrat – Republican party by Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, and other influential opponents of the Federalists in 1792.

The Republican party is the younger of the two parties. Founded in 1854 by anti-slavery expansion activists and modernizers, the Republican Party rose to prominence with the election of Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president.

## History

Since the division of the Republican Party in the election of 1912, the Democratic party has consistently positioned itself to the left of the Republican Party in economic as well as social matters. The economically left-leaning activist philosophy of Franklin D. Roosevelt, which has strongly influenced American liberalism, has shaped much of the party's economic agenda since 1932. Roosevelt's New Deal coalition usually controlled the national government until 1964.

The Republican Party was founded in 1854 by anti-slavery expansion activists and modernizers, it rose to prominence with the election of Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican president. The party presided over the American Civil War and Reconstruction and was harried by internal factions and scandals towards the end of the 19th century. Today, the Republican Party supports a pro-business platform, with further foundations in economic libertarianism and a brand of social conservatism increasingly based on the viewpoints of the Religious Right.

## Differences in Philosophy

While there may be several differences in opinion between individual Democrats and Republicans on certain issues, what follows is a generalization of their stand on several of these issues. A Democrat is typically known as a supporter of a broader range of social services in America than those advocated by Republicans. Republican philosophy is based on a limited influence of government and a dominant foreign policy.

Republicans are considered on the "right" end of the political spectrum while Democrats are on the "left." The far right generally is pro-religion, anti-bureaucracy, pro-military, pro-business and pro-personal responsibility.

Republicans, are usually considered conservative (fiscally as well as socially), maybe a little pious, pro-business and against the bureaucracy often associated with big government. They see big governments as wasteful and an obstacle to getting things done. Their approach is Darwinian in that the strong shall survive, cream rises to the top, etc.

To the far left of the spectrum are the extreme liberal, or the most extreme democrats. Democrats are considered more liberal. Democrats tend to favor an active role for government in society and believe that such involvement – be it environmental regulations against polluting or anti-discrimination laws – can improve the quality of people's lives and help achieve the larger goals of opportunity and equality. On the other hand, Republicans tend to favor a limited role for government in society and believe that such reliance on the private sector (businesses and individuals) – be it

avoiding unnecessary environmental regulations or heavy-handed anti-discrimination laws – can improve economic productivity and help achieve the larger goals of freedom and self-reliance

## **Individual and Community**

Republican philosophy leans more towards individual freedoms, rights and responsibilities. In contrast, Democrats attach greater importance to equality and social/community responsibility.

## **Democratic vs Republican stand on controversial issues**

The Democrats and Republicans have varying ideas on many issues, some of which are listed below. These are broadly generalized opinions; it must be noted that there are many politicians in each party who have different and more nuanced positions on these issues.

### **Military**

Republicans: Prefer increasing military spending and have a more hard line stance against countries like Iran, with a higher tendency to deploy the military option.

Democrats: Prefer lower increases in military spending and are comparatively more reluctant to using military force against countries like Iran, Syria and Libya.

### **Gun control laws**

Democrats favor more gun control laws e.g. oppose the right to carry concealed weapons in public places. Republicans oppose gun control laws and are strong supporters of the Second Amendment (the right to bear arms) as well as the right to carry concealed weapons.

### **Abortion**

Democrats support abortion rights and keeping elective abortions legal. Republicans believe abortions should not be legal and that Roe v. Wade should be overturned. Some Republicans go so far as to oppose the contraception mandate i.e. requiring employer-paid health insurance plans to cover contraception.

A related point of divergence is embryonic stem cell research - Democrats support it while Republicans do not.

### **Gay rights**

Democrats tend to favor equal rights for gay and lesbian couples e.g. the right to get married and adopt children. Republicans believe that marriage should be between a man and a woman so they do not support gay marriage or allowing them to adopt children.

### **Death Penalty**

Opponents of the death penalty form a much higher fraction of the Democratic Party when compared to the GOP.

### **Taxes**

Democrats support progressive taxes i.e. they want high-income individuals to pay taxes at a higher rate. They support higher taxes on the wealthy to pay for public programs. Republicans support tax cuts for everyone (rich and poor alike). They consider higher tax rates on the rich a form of class warfare.

### **Minimum Wage**

Democrats favor increase in the minimum wage to help workers. Republicans oppose raising the minimum wage because it hurts businesses.

### **Role of Government**

One of the fundamental differences between Democratic and Republican party ideals is around the role of government. Republicans favor a small government – both in terms of the number of people employed by the government and in terms of the roles and responsibilities of government in society. For example, the Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA) is a government agency that many Republican presidential candidates love to deride as an example of "useless" government agencies that they would shut down.

Another example is the food stamps program. Republicans in [Congress](#) are demanding cuts in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (or SNAP), while Democrats want to expand this program. Democrats argue that with unemployment rate high in the economy, many families need the assistance provided by the program.

Republicans argue that there is a lot of fraud in the program that is wasting taxpayer dollars. They also want to institute clauses that force beneficiaries of the program to take more personal responsibility through measures such as mandatory drug testing, and looking for a job.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Civil Rights

Abraham Lincoln belonged to the Republican Party, so the roots of the party are in individual freedom and the abolition of slavery. Indeed, 82% of the Republicans in the [U.S. Senate](#) voted in favor of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 while only 69% of Democrats did. The Southern wing of the Democratic party was vehemently opposed to civil rights legislation.

However, after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, there was a sort of role reversal. Todd Purdum, author of *An Idea Whose Time Has Come*, a book about the legislative maneuvering behind the passage of the Civil Rights Act, says this in [an interview](#) with NPR:

SIEGEL: How much of the Republican Party in Congress supported the civil rights bill as it still was? And how many voted for cloture to break the filibuster?

PURDUM: Well, the final vote in the Senate for the bill was 73 to 27, with 27 out of 33 Republican votes. So in proportional terms, the Republicans supported this bill much more than the Democrats did in both houses.

SIEGEL: A few weeks after Lyndon Johnson signed that bill into law, as we heard at the beginning, the Republicans go and they nominate Barry Goldwater for president, a Republican who had voted against civil rights. And their legacy is jettisoned at that moment.

PURDUM: In some important way that was the beginning of changing the Republican Party from the party of Lincoln into the party of white backlash which is, frankly, reputation that in the South particularly endures to this day, and has hurt the Republican Party as a national brand in presidential elections.

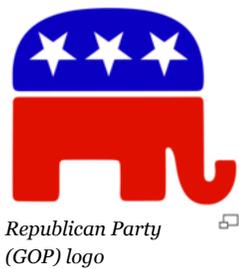
Republicans believe that Purdum's point of view is misleading because Goldwater supported previous attempts at passing a Civil Rights act, and desegregation, but did not like the 1964 Act because he felt it infringed on States' rights.

In any case, the present dynamic is that minorities like African Americans and [Hispanics](#) are more likely to vote Democratic than Republican. However, there are prominent African American Republicans like Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Herman Cain, Clarence Thomas, Michael Steele and Alan West, as well as Hispanics like Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, Alberto Gonzales and Brian Sandoval.

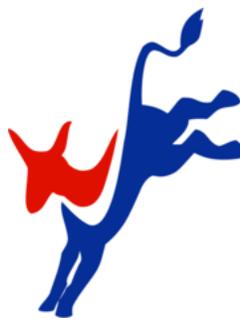
## Voter ID laws

Civil liberties groups like the ACLU criticize the GOP for pushing for [voter ID laws](#) — Republicans believe these laws are necessary to prevent voter fraud while Democrats claim that voter fraud is virtually non-existent and that these laws disenfranchise black and Hispanic voters who tend to be poorer and unable to obtain ID cards.

## Logos of the Democratic and Republican parties



Republican Party (GOP) logo



Democratic Party logo

## Red states and Blue states list

Due to the TV coverage during some of the presidential elections in the past, the color Red has become associated with the Republicans (as in Red states – the states where the Republican presidential nominee wins) and Blue is associated with the Democrats.

The Democratic Party, once dominant in the Southeastern United States, is now strongest in the Northeast (Mid-Atlantic and New England), Great Lakes Region, as well as along the Pacific Coast (especially Coastal California), including Hawaii. The Democrats are also strongest in major cities. Recently, Democratic candidates have been faring better in some southern states, such as Virginia, Arkansas, and Florida, and in the Rocky Mountain states, especially Colorado, Montana, Nevada, and New Mexico.

Since 1980, geographically the Republican "base" ("red states") is strongest in the South and West, and weakest in the Northeast and the Pacific Coast. The Republican Party's strongest focus of political influence lies in the Great Plains states, particularly Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska, and in the western states of Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah.

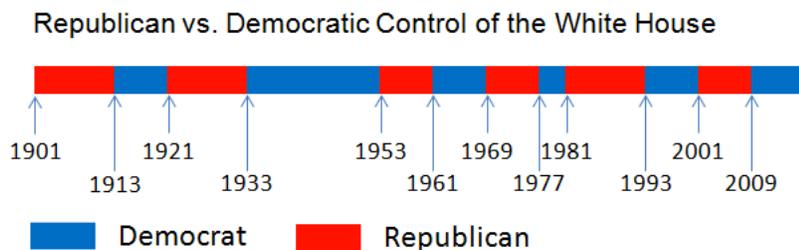
## Famous Republican vs Democratic Presidents

Republicans have controlled the White House for 28 of the last 43 years since Richard Nixon became president. Famous Democrat Presidents have been Franklin Roosevelt, who pioneered the New Deal in America and stood for 4 terms, John F. Kennedy, who presided over the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban missile crisis, and was assassinated in Office; Bill Clinton, who was impeached by the House of Representatives; and Nobel Peace Prize winners Barack Obama and Jimmy Carter.

Famous Republican Presidents include Abraham Lincoln, who abolished slavery; Teddy Roosevelt, known for the Panama Canal; Ronald Reagan, credited for ending the Cold War with Gorbachev; and the two Bush family Presidents of recent times. Republican President Richard Nixon was forced to resign over the Watergate scandal.

## Control of the White House

This graphic shows which party controlled the White House since 1901. You can find the list of Presidents on Wikipedia.



## References

- [Republican Party \(official website\)](#)
- [Democratic Party \(official website\)](#)
- [Wikipedia: Republican Party \(United States\)](#)
- [Wikipedia: Democratic Party \(United States\)](#)